

# **Impact of Anti-Gender Opposition on TGD and LGBTQI Movements**

## **Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) Report**

**2023**



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This publication is a regional report that is part of a larger report entitled "[Global Report on the Impact of Anti-Gender Opposition on TGD and LGBTQI Movements](#)". The Global Report is a comprehensive study on the impact of anti-gender (AG) opposition on the human rights of trans, gender-diverse, and LGBTQI individuals worldwide. This regional report focuses specifically on the impact of AG opposition in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) region.

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## About GATE

**GATE is an international advocacy organization working towards justice and equality for trans, gender diverse and intersex communities.** Rooted in our movements, we work collaboratively with strategic partners at the global level to provide knowledge, resources and access to international institutions and processes. Our vision is a world free from human rights violations based on gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. Our strategy is to transform the landscape of global advocacy, knowledge creation and resource distribution through critical inclusion of trans, gender diverse and intersex movements at all levels of political, legal, and socio-economic processes.

**Find out more about GATE by visiting [www.gate.ngo](http://www.gate.ngo)**

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# Glossary

## AG

Anti-gender: The anti-gender movement is an international movement which opposes what it refers to as “gender ideology”, “gender theory”, or “genderism” (Kováts, Eszter, 2016)

## BIPOC

Black, Indigenous and People of Color

## Centrist

Someone who supports the center of the range of political opinions

## Far-Right

Includes “persons or groups who hold extreme nationalist, xenophobic, racist, religious fundamentalist, or other reactionary views”

## Gender-Critical

Believing that sex is a fact of biology that cannot be changed, and doubting the idea of gender identity (a person’s feeling of being male, female, or another identity, especially when this is different from the sex they were assigned at birth)

## Left-Wing

Political parties, groups or people who believe that wealth and power should be shared among all parts of society

## LGBTQI

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, and Intersex

**LGR**

Legal gender recognition

**Mixed**

The group's ideological stances are not homogenous; they are mixed between left-wing and right-wing stances

**PWDs**

Persons with disabilities

**Right-Wing**

Political parties, groups or people that have traditional opinions, and who believe in low taxes, the private ownership of property and industry, and less aid to the poor

**TGD**

Trans and gender diverse

**TGDI**

Trans, gender diverse, and intersex

**Trans-Exclusionary Radical "Feminists" / TERFs**

A radical wing of feminism that rejects the assertion that trans women are women, the inclusion of trans women in women's spaces, and trans rights. (The word "Feminists" has been placed in quotation marks to highlight how the TERF movement does not subscribe to the generally accepted definition of feminism, which is a movement primarily about gender equality).

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# Analysis of Survey Data

## Introduction

For a general introduction to the Survey completed by respondents, including positionality, data collection methods, and who took part in the Survey, please refer to the [Global Report](#).

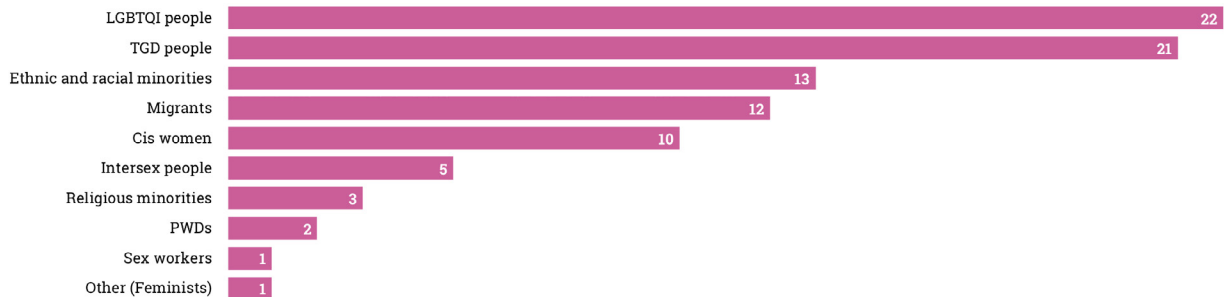
The next few pages provide an analysis of the Survey data for the EECA (Eastern Europe and Central Asia) region, followed by a breakdown of the data by country. For an analysis of the data from the Asia region, please view the [Asia Report](#), and for data analysis from the rest of Europe, please view the [Europe Report](#).

## AG Actors

In the EECA region, the main problem related to AG actors is that governments rarely investigate alleged crimes, which respondents indicate is due to the reason that some members of the AG movement are in the government, or, in some cases, AG actors are government actors (for example in Russia). In several cases, respondents report that governments and AG actors have coordinated communication and actors are financially supported by the government.

In many contexts in the EECA region, respondents indicate that AG actors are political parties and have seats in the parliaments or other similar national legislative institutions. In most cases, they are categorized as right-wing on the political ideology spectrum, but in many cases, AG actors have mixed political ideological stances. In rare cases, they tend to be left-wing.

## AG groups have targeted the following groups in the past year:



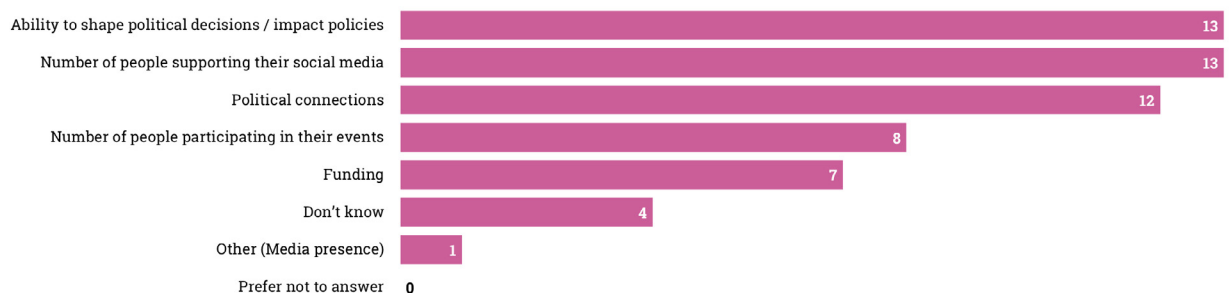
AG groups focus on “western ideas”, “family values”, sex education, children, sex work, and “gender/LGBTQI ideology” in public communication to spread and gain support for their agenda.

Information regarding various AG actors’ coordination with each other is in most cases unknown, but some respondents have report that various AG actors coordinate actions between each other. In some cases, AG actors engage in violence directed at vulnerable groups.

## In the past year, AG groups have engaged in violence directed at vulnerable groups



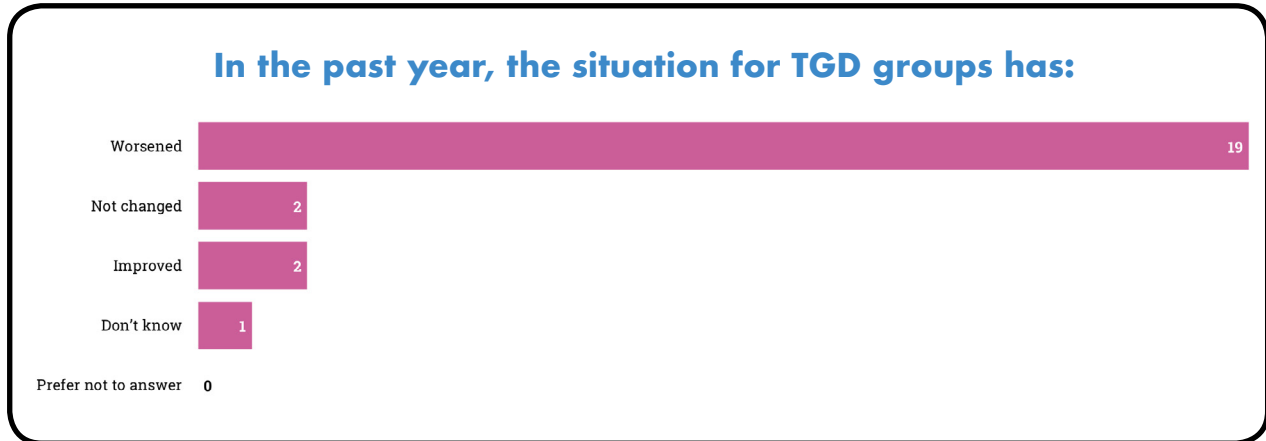
## In the past year, have these groups been growing stronger in terms of the following?



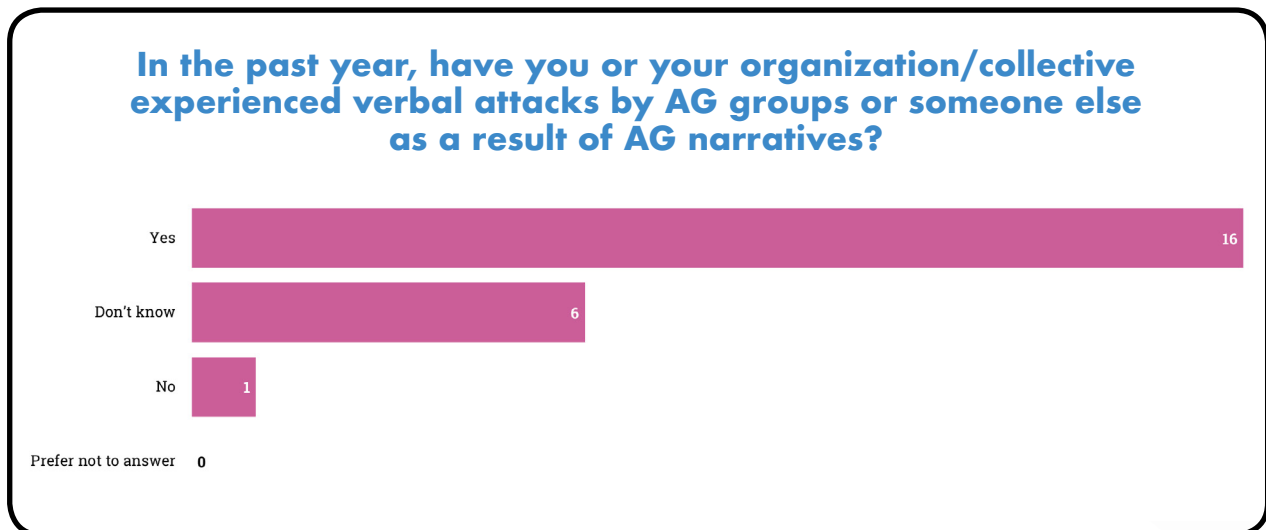


## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

In this environment, most of the respondents believe that the human rights situation for TGD communities has worsened in the past year.



According to respondents, verbal attacks against activists are common. In the past 12 months, most of the organizations/collectives affiliated with the respondents or respondents themselves experienced verbal attacks by AG groups or someone else because of AG narratives.

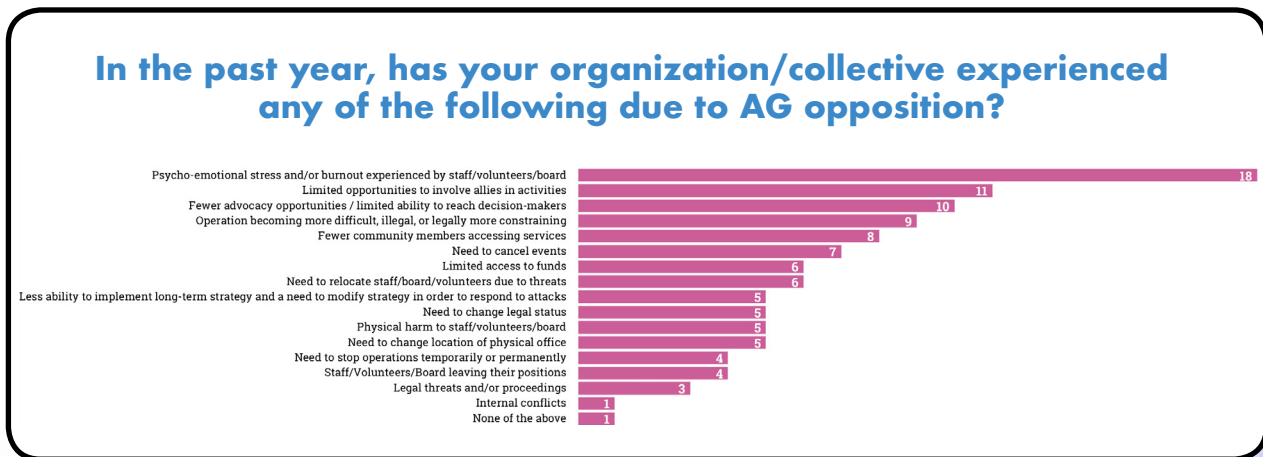


Most of the organizations/collectives affiliated with the respondents or respondents themselves experienced physical attacks by AG groups or someone else as a result of AG narratives.



Respondents report that, in most cases, the law enforcement authorities were not notified of these attacks, as police either do not open cases due to lack of proper legislation, or open an investigation but do not hold the persons legally responsible. Threats against activists are common, mostly on social networks and the police are usually not notified.

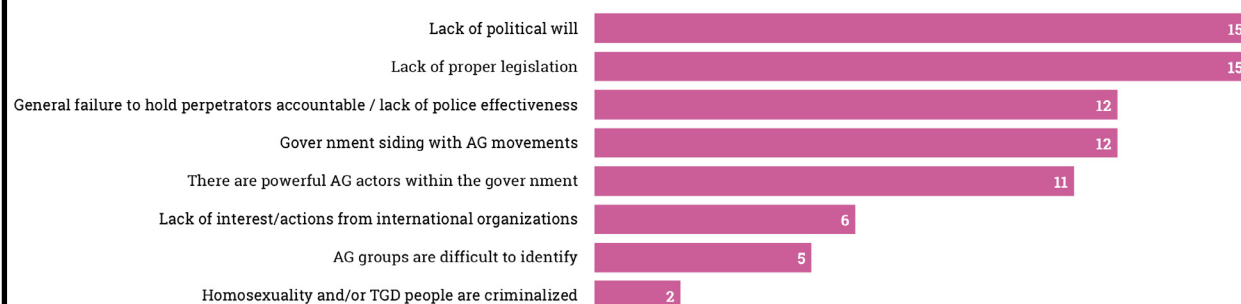
Respondents indicate that AG opposition negatively impacts pro-TGD/LGBTQI rights groups' ability to operate and advocate for positive changes, and leads to psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout experienced by staff, board, and/or volunteers. The full picture of the problems experienced by pro-TGD/LGBTQI groups as a result of AG opposition is as follows:



In several cases, respondents report that AG groups have managed to influence policy and legal developments impacting TGD communities in the past year, with the harshening of Russian LGBTQI propaganda legislation being one of the most significant policy developments in the region.

Many countries in the EECA region lack legislation and/or political will to counteract AG opposition, according to respondents.

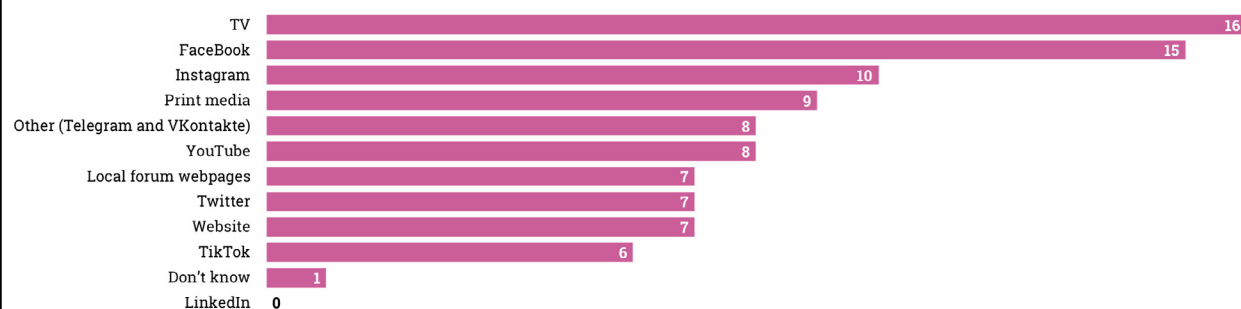
### In the past year, the biggest challenges to countering AG mobilization have been:



## Role of the Media

AG groups actively engage in the creation and spread of fake news relating to TGD communities in the EECA region.

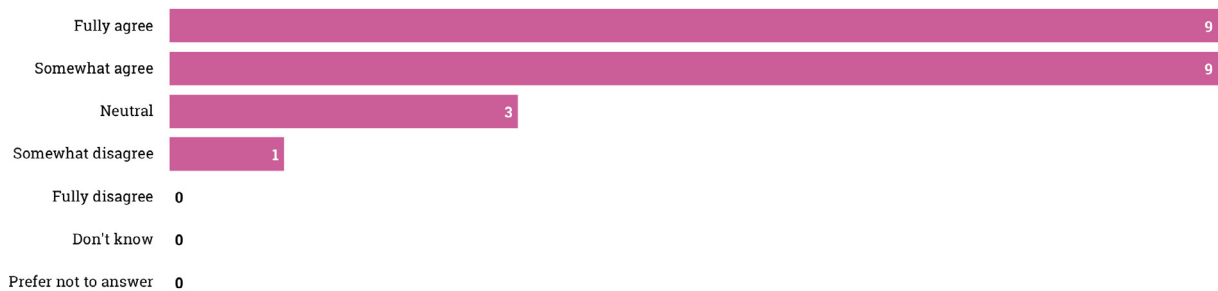
### Media channels used most by AG groups in the past year



Respondents report that, in most cases, AG social media posts get reported to social media platforms. However, most of the time reports get ignored and harmful content rarely gets taken down.

Respondents' experiences show that the social media platforms are the main sources of AG opposition, including mobilization, and these platforms enable transphobic and anti-LGBTQI hate to spread by not sufficiently implementing rules and removing the false and misleading information or other activities from their platforms.

### In my experience, social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization



### In my experience, social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned



What follows is a breakdown of the data from the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) region by country.

# Armenia

## AG Actors

According to the respondent, AG actors are present in Armenia and the government rarely investigates alleged crimes committed by AG groups. The respondent reports that AG actors are not government actors and do not have seats in the government. Information about their funding is unknown. AG actors target cis women, religious minorities, migrants, LGBTQI, and TGD communities:

“They fight against western ideas, sex education, sex work, sexual and gender diverse people.”

“Anti-trans movement has enlarged in Armenia since June 2022 and several cases of attacks were made on trans\* people which were reported by community-based organizations.”

The nature of the political ideological affiliation or coordination between various AG actors is unknown to the respondent.

According to the respondent, AG actors are growing in terms of the number of people supporting their social media and participating in their events, as well as their ability to shape political decisions and impact policies.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

The respondent reports that they or their organization have experienced verbal attacks in the past year by AG groups. According to the respondent, all the cases were acts of hatred on the grounds of gender identity:

“The cases have been more intensive since June 2022. [Example 1.](#)  
[Example 2.](#) [Example 3.](#)”

These attacks were coordinated between various AG actors. These cases were reported to the local police, who began investigations, but closed the cases without holding anyone legally responsible.

The respondent also mentions that their organization had experienced physical attacks:

“The first case of the attacks was against our NGO’s community mobilizer based in Lori region, Vanadzor city.”

This incident was also reported to the local police, who again began investigations but again closed them without holding anyone legally responsible. No threats were reported in the Survey by the respondent.

The respondent reports that their organization had experienced the following as the result of AG opposition: need to change location of physical office, need to stop operations temporarily or permanently, need to cancel events, fewer advocacy opportunities / limited ability to reach decision-makers, limited opportunities to involve allies in activities, need to relocate staff/board/volunteers due to threats, psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout experienced by staff/volunteers/board, and physical harm to staff/volunteers/board.

The respondent did not report whether AG actions had influenced any policy in the past year in Armenia.

The biggest barriers to counteracting AG opposition were reported to be lack of proper legislation, lack of political will, general failure to hold perpetrators accountable / lack of police effectiveness, and AG groups being difficult to identify.



## Role of the Media

The respondent reports that AG groups actively create and spread false information about TGD communities and use TV, print media, FaceBook, and TikTok to communicate with their audiences and spread their agenda. Their social media content gets reported to the social media platforms, but is rarely taken down. The respondent partially agrees that social media platforms are the main means for AG mobilization and that these platforms are not enforcing their rules sufficiently to prevent harmful content and fake news from spreading and violent actions being planned.

# Bulgaria

## AG Actors

The respondent reports that some members of AG groups are in the Bulgarian government, and that the government rarely investigates alleged crimes committed by AG groups. Information on whether AG actors are political parties is unknown to the respondent. AG actors receive funding, but this information is not made public, or is hidden. They target ethnic and racial minorities, cis women, migrants, PWDs, and LGBTQI/TGDI communities, and they use “Western ideas”, “family values”, and “genderism” as their main public discursive topics to spread and gain support for their agenda. They are categorized as mixed on the political ideology spectrum.

Information about their coordination or engagement in violence towards vulnerable groups is not known by the respondent. The respondent reports that AG groups have been growing in the past year in terms of the number of people supporting them on social media, and their ability to shape political decisions and impact policies has strengthened.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

In the respondent's view, the human rights situation for TGD communities has been improving in Bulgaria in the past year. Verbal and physical attacks or threats were not reported in the Survey. Psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout experienced by staff/volunteers/board was reported as resulting from AG opposition.

Information on whether AG actors have been able to influence any policy relating to TGD communities is unknown by the respondent. The respondent indicates that the main barriers to countering AG opposition have been the lack of proper legislation, lack of political will, and a general failure to hold perpetrators accountable / lack of police effectiveness.

## Role of the Media

The respondent reports that AG groups engage in the spread of false information relating to TGD communities, using FaceBook and websites to communicate with audiences. While their social media posts have been reported to the social media platforms, and reports were considered, the content was not taken down. The respondent fully agrees that social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization and that the social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned.

# Croatia

## AG Actors

The respondent indicates that AG actors are present in Croatia, and while their institutional arrangement information is unknown, they are not political parties. Information about their funding is also unknown to the respondent. They target LGBTQI/TGD communities and use abortion, sex work, sex education, and “family values” as their main discursive points to spread and gain support for their agenda. AG actors are categorized as mixed on the political ideology spectrum. Information about coordination between various AG actors or their engagement in violence directed towards vulnerable groups is unknown to the respondent.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

In the respondent’s view, the human rights situation for TGD communities has been worsening in the past year in Croatia. AG actors engage in verbal attacks and threats in the form of general hate speech and transphobia on social media. Their actions have not been reported to authorities. Physical attacks were not reported in the Survey. AG opposition has led to psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout being experienced by staff/volunteers/board within the respondent’s organization. The respondent does not believe that AG groups have been able to influence any policy relating to TGD communities in the past year. The respondent named lack of proper legislation, political will, and AG groups being difficult to identify as the main barriers to counteract their opposition.

## Role of the Media

According to the respondent, AG actors engage in the creation and spread of false and harmful information relating to TGD communities and use FaceBook, Instagram, Twitter, and webpages for communication with their audiences. Their social media posts get reported to the social media platforms, but the content is not taken down. The respondent fully agrees that the social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned, and that the social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned.

# Estonia

## AG Actors

According to the respondent, some AG groups have coordinated communication with the government, and some are political parties – Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond, EKRE, and the Conservative People’s Party of Estonia:

“They have seats in the parliament and the anti-gender authoritarian party was a member of the last government. Its support from by the polls is high, second position by popularity.”

Information about their funding is unknown to the respondent. AG actors are categorized as right-wing on the political ideology spectrum.

The respondent indicates that AG actors target ethnic and racial minorities, migrants, and LGBTQI/TGD communities and use abortion, “traditional family values”, anti-vaccination, political correctness, freedom of speech, anti-LGBT issues, “gender ideology”, and “discrimination of Christians” as their main discursive topics to spread and gain support for their agenda.

The respondent indicates that various AG actors have coordinated with each other in the past year:

“Sihtasutus Perekonna ja Traditsiooni Kaitseks (Foundation for the Protection of Family and Tradition) and political party Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond, EKRE (Conservative People’s Party of Estonia) share similar values. Leaders of both organizations have been giving speeches at each other’s events and gathering and they share the same “concerns” – vaccination, LGBT rights, abortion rights and so on.”

According to the respondent, AG groups have been becoming stronger in the past year in terms of the number of people participating in their events, funding, political connections, and their ability to shape political decisions.



## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

Overall, the respondent believes that the human rights situation for TGD communities has not changed in the past year in Estonia. The respondent indicates that AG actors engage in verbal attacks against the TGD/LGBTQI community:

“Media outlets objektiv.ee and uueduudised.ee constantly produce news and opinion pieces that directly oppose marriage equality and transgender rights issues. Leaders from anti-gender organizations have large followers base in social media and they constantly share opinions which are directly harmful to the LGBT community.”

Information about these actions being coordinated between various AG groups is unknown by the participant. These incidents were not reported to law enforcement authorities. Physical attacks and threats were not reported by the respondent in the Survey.

As the result of AG opposition, the respondent's organization has experienced limited access to funds, the need to change the location of the physical office, psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout experienced by staff/volunteers/board, and legal threats and/or proceedings.

The respondent names the following as the biggest barriers in counteracting AG opposition: lack of proper legislation, lack of political will, powerful AG actors within the government, and a general failure to hold perpetrators accountable / lack of police effectiveness.

## Role of the Media

The respondent reports that AG actors engage in the creation and spread of false and harmful information relating to TGD communities, using FaceBook, YouTube, and websites when communicating with their audiences. While their posts have been reported to social media platforms, the content was not taken down. The respondent somewhat agrees that social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization, and fully agrees that social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned.

# Georgia

## AG Actors

Respondents report that the government and AG actors have coordinated communication and the government rarely investigates alleged crimes committed by AG groups. The respondents indicate that the Conservative Movement of Georgia is an AG group and a far-right political party in Georgia. The group has its own TV channel – Alt Info. According to respondents, AG groups don't have seats in the parliament. In terms of funding, a respondent says,

“Political parties in Georgia are obliged to publish detailed information about the funding. Therefore, we know the amount of funding and the identity of funders. But the problem is that the amount of money indicated publicly is extremely low and we have doubts that they spend much more money in Georgia which is undocumented. Just recently, based on an appeal from the Audit Service, the court fined Alt-Info, a media organization, 216,000 GEL [approximately \$70,000] which was quite unexpected to happen and caught civil society off guard. Alt-info is the media organization run by the same people as the Conservative Movement of Georgia.”

AG actors target ethnic and racial minorities, religious minorities, migrants, LGBTQI people, feminists / women's rights activists, and use “family values”, migration, and sex education as main discursive topics to spread and gain support for their agenda.

According to a respondent, AG groups also speak about

“1. ‘Homosexuality’ which according to anti-gender groups is imposed on Georgia by West, by western embassies and donors. Most of the groups acknowledge that gay people do exist, but they are against ‘gay propaganda’ as being LGBTQI is considered to be immoral, something to be ashamed of and hidden.

2. Family values and traditions – anti-gender groups frame family values and traditions as a concept that excludes “gender equality” and gender ideology, homosexuality, transgenderism, etc. 3. Religion - anti-gender groups often interpret Orthodox Christianity (dominant religion in Georgia followed by around 80% of people) as a doctrine that excludes acceptance of LGBTQI+ people and equality. Homosexuality and transgender identities are actively promoted to be a sin. Often in Georgia, you will hear about Sodom Gomorrah as proof that in Christianity homosexuality is condemned.”

AG groups are categorized by respondents as being mixed on the political ideology spectrum:

“The anti-gender groups differ in the ideology, size, in how radical and violent they are, in their target audiences. What we have seen is that usually they unite, and come together when every year the LGBTQI+ movement is trying to mark pride week. We have seen the anti-gender groups and leaders come together, participate in demonstrations together with regards to pride in Georgia.”

Respondents indicate that various AG actors coordinate with each other:

“There are several groups, and they are well coordinated. Some groups are coordinated by “the Society of Chokhosans of the Patriarchate” (Geo: “საპატრიარქოს ჩოხოხანთა საზოგადოებასთან”) Georgian March (Geo: ქართული მარში). Levan Vasadze (businessman and political figure, organizing Family Congresses and having close ties with Dugin/Russia) Sponsoring tv Alt-Info, a political party Georgian Conservative Movement (კონსერვატორული მოძრაობა), Some monasteries and priests from Orthodox Church (that are all the time involved in organizing). All of them were organizing 5th July pogrom in Tbilisi, against Pride March.”

AG groups engage in violence directed at vulnerable groups. Both respondents mentioned last year’s **5<sup>th</sup> of July events**.

Respondents believe that AG groups have been becoming stronger in the past year in terms of funding, political connections, and their ability to shape political decisions/impact policies.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

Respondents believe that, in the past year, the human rights situation for TGD communities has not changed in Georgia. They report that verbal attacks do happen:

“3 leaders of the main anti-LGBT anti-gender group Alt-info/Conservative Movement of Georgia made open and public threats to Tbilisi Pride week 2022. The fact that the demonstration organized by Alt-info in 2021 (July 5) was extremely violent (journalists/people were attacked, beaten, stabbed, and Tbilisi Pride offices were ransacked) made the new threats in 2022 feel real, imminent, and dangerous. Tbilisi Pride approached relevant ministries, and government bodies about the threats. The investigation was immediately launched. But the problem is usually not opening case/starting investigation but effective investigation.”

Another respondent says,

“5-th July 2021 – far rights group members climb up and enter our office balcony, that time I was in the office. During this period we received messages that includes hate speech on our social networks.”

Respondents believe that various AG actors coordinated these attacks. The Ministry of Interior, the Prosecutor’s Office, and Security Services were informed. The case is still under investigation with some perpetrators being held accountable.

Respondents report that physical attacks also happen:

“Alt info/Conservative Movement of Georgia organized a homophobic demonstration on July 3rd, 2022 in order to hinder the organization of Tbilisi Pride Festival. Hundreds of people were trying to attack the festival territory physically, but the police stopped them.”

Respondents did not report receiving any threats in the Survey.

According to respondents, AG opposition has led to the need to change physical location of the office, the need to stop operations temporarily or permanently, the need to cancel events, the need to relocate staff/board/volunteers due to threats, less ability to implement long-term strategy and a need to modify strategy in order to respond to attacks, psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout experienced by staff/volunteers/board, internal conflicts, and staff/volunteers/board leaving their positions. According to respondents, AG actors have not been able to influence any policies relating to TGD communities in the past year.

## Role of the Media

AG groups engage in the creation and spread of false and harmful information about TGD communities, using TV, FaceBook, TikTok, YouTube, and Telegram as their main communication channels. A respondent says,

“The main anti-LGBT anti-gender group Alt-info is broadcasting nationally with the authorization by Communications Commission of Georgia.”

AG social media posts have been reported to social media platforms and content is sometimes taken down. Both respondents somewhat agree that social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization. The respondents differ (1 neutral, and 1 fully agrees) on their opinion as to whether social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned.

# Kazakhstan

## AG Actors

According to respondents, some AG actors are present in government and their alleged crimes are rarely investigated. Respondents report that certain government representatives and institutions have very discriminatory attitudes. Their source of funding is unknown. AG actors mainly target cis women, LGBTQI and TGD people, and use “western ideas”, “family values”, sex education, misogyny, and sexism as their main discursive points in spreading and gaining support for their agenda, and mostly use local forums, websites, and Instagram to communicate with their audiences.

A respondent reports that

“Several AG bloggers are active who call for discrimination and have 30K+ followers.”

Respondents indicate that, in the past 12 months, AG actors have been growing in terms of the number of people supporting their activity on social media, as well as the number of people participating in their events. The following factors were named as the main barriers to countering AG opposition: lack of proper legislation, lack of political will, lack of interest/actions from international organizations, and general failure to hold perpetrators accountable / lack of police effectiveness.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

According to the respondent from the LGBTQI organization, the TGD rights situation is worsening in Kazakhstan. Due to AG opposition, the organization faced the following challenges: limited access to funds, fewer advocacy opportunities / limited ability to reach decision-makers, limited opportunities to involve allies in activities, need to relocate staff/board/volunteers due to threats, and psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout experienced by staff/volunteers/board.



This respondent also states that

“These groups managed to cancel the film *Buzz Light-year* in Kazakhstan because there was a kiss of two girls for 0.5 seconds.”

Apart from this incident, no specific attacks were reported in the Survey, except for an individual discrimination case of a trans person in their workspace. The respondent mentions that reporting such cases to the police is ineffective due to a lack of proper legislation.

## Role of the Media

The respondent affiliated with an LGBTQI organization partly agrees with the statement that social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization, and fully agrees with the statement that social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned. They also report that human rights-related posts have not been blocked by social media platforms.

# Montenegro

## AG Actors

According to the respondent, some members of AG groups are in the government and the government rarely investigates alleged crimes committed by AG groups. Some AG actors are political parties, for example, the Democratic Front, and GI 21 Maj, who don't have seats in the parliament. Information about their funding is unknown to the respondent.

AG groups target migrants and LGBTQI communities and are categorized as mixed on the political ideology spectrum. Information about various AG groups coordinating with each other or engaging in violence directed at vulnerable groups is not known by the respondent. In the past year, AG groups been growing in terms of the number of people supporting them on social media and participating in their events, as well as their financial capacities.

The respondent does not know whether AG groups influenced policies relating to the TGD community in the past year. Lack of political will and lack of interest/actions from international organizations were named as the barriers in counteracting AG opposition.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

In the respondent's view, for the past year the human rights situation for TGD communities in Montenegro has worsened. Verbal attacks and threats happen – mostly hate messages and comments on social media. Incidents are reported to the authorities and investigations are opened, but then closed without holding persons legally responsible. Physical attacks have not been reported in the Survey.

The organization affiliated with the respondent has experienced the following as the result of AG opposition: fewer advocacy opportunities / limited ability to reach decision-makers, limited opportunities to involve allies in activities, fewer community members accessing services, and psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout experienced by staff/volunteers/board.

## Role of the Media

According to the respondent, AG actors engage in the creation and spread of false information relating to TGD communities using local forum webpages, FaceBook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok to spread and gain support for their agenda. While their social media posts are being reported to social media platforms, and reports are considered, the content is not taken down. The respondent fully agrees that social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization and that social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned.

# Romania

## AG Actors

According to the respondent, some members of AG groups are in the Romanian government, with Alianța Pentru Unirea Românilor (AUR) specifically named as a political party with an AG ideology. This party has 27 seats in the parliament. Information about their funding is unknown. They target LGBTQI/TGD communities and use sex education, “gender ideology”, and “family values” as their main discursive topics when spreading and seeking support for their agenda. AG actors are categorized as right-wing on the political ideology spectrum. Information about their coordination is unknown to the respondent. The respondent believes that AG groups have not engaged in violence directed at any vulnerable groups. In the past year, AG actors have grown in terms of the number of people supporting them on social media.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

The respondent indicates that the human rights situation for TGD groups has been worsening in the past year.

No further information was supplied by the respondent.

# Russia

## AG Actors

According to respondents, AG actors are government actors in Russia, and government and AG groups, who are not government actors, have coordinated communication. Alleged crimes committed by AG actors are almost never investigated. Respondents report that activists are usually persecuted by the police, based on the police reports filed by AG actors, while AG actors' criminal behavior is never investigated.

Political parties, United Russia, Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, Communist Party of the Russian Federation, and A Just Russia – For Truth, were named as the most transphobic AG actors. These parties control the majority of the Russian parliament. The Russian president was named as the major AG actor in the country. AG actors are either positioned on the right-wing spectrum of political ideologies, or they have mixed political stances.

While the LGBTQI community in general was named as the main target of AG actors, TGD communities were reported to be a community that is targeted separately. Beyond these communities, ethnic and religious minorities were named as the second biggest target of AG actors, followed by migrants, cis women, and sex workers. AG actors mostly tend to capitalize on anti-Western narratives, claiming that the west/NATO is trying to destroy Russia and traditional family values through feminism and LGBT “propaganda”, amongst others. According to a respondent, the Russian politician, Alexander Hinstein, said in a speech: “If gays die, it will be Russia’s victory”. AG actors often use the narrative of Russia having a great history/past which was destroyed by the dissolution of the Soviet Union. AG actors also attack abortion and sexual education, and scare the population with the decline in population to promote AG arguments. Respondents also mention that AG actors even attack couples who do not have or do not want to have children.

According to respondents, AG actors are getting stronger in Russia in terms of their political connections, their ability to shape political decisions and impact policies, the number of people supporting their social media, the number of people participating in their events, and in their funding. According to the respondents, the most important factor in the struggle to counteract AG opposition was the government being the major AG actor, followed by a lack of proper legislation, general failure to hold perpetrators accountable due to police ineffectiveness, and lack of political will.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

All respondents agree that the situation for TGD communities is worsening in Russia. One of the given is that the “gay propaganda” law is getting harsher and now includes adults. All NGOs working on human rights are listed as foreign agents, which makes their operation and access to funds very difficult. Respondents also mention the war with Ukraine, which has

“severed international ties, leaving transgender and LGBT people ‘locked in’ in Russia which is no longer restrained by cross-country human rights agreements.”

8 Respondents report having experienced verbal attacks, 2 experienced physical attacks, and 4 had threats made against them. Incidents were not reported because respondents agree that the government is behind the attacks, and going to the police increases the risks for LGBTQI/TGD activists. Lack of proper legislation was also named as one of the factors preventing respondents from reporting incidents to the police.

1 Respondent recalls that they were physically attacked

“on the basis of nail polish and attackers questioned if [they were] a boy or a girl and in general were not too keen on the idea of wide gender expression.”

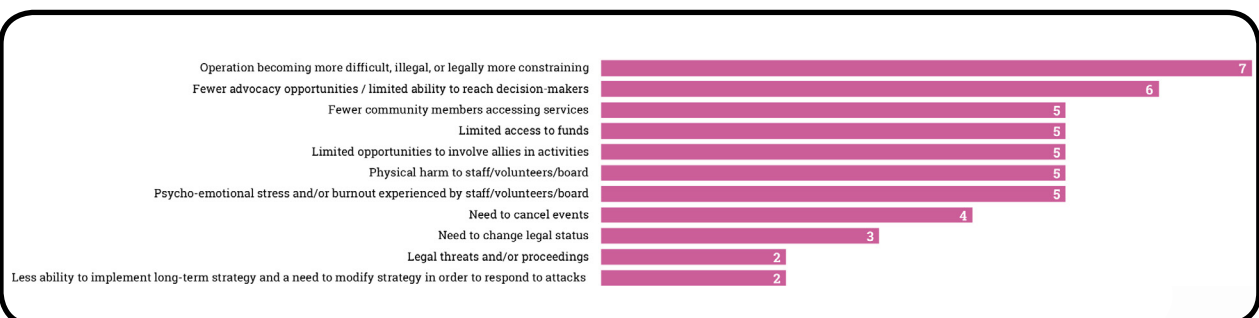
The respondent went to the police and the investigation was opened, but the case was closed without holding anyone legally responsible.

Respondents report that threats to organizations happen very often online, but due to a lack of political will and a hostile environment, the incidents are not reported. A respondent says,

“In January-February 2022, we were forced to close one of our areas of work in HIV prevention due to increased homophobic attention: activists of the homophobic “Bloodseeker” community came to the mobile HIV service point where our outreachers worked, there were also publications about the mobile point itself on local news portals (example: [https://78.ru/articles/2022-02-08/tonkaya\\_gran\\_mezhdu\\_svododoi\\_ivimiraniem](https://78.ru/articles/2022-02-08/tonkaya_gran_mezhdu_svododoi_ivimiraniem)). Around the same time, our social networks and telegram bots were subjected to a DDoS attack by homophobic activists.”

Other activists report that they were attacked upon returning from an event and were pushed around and insulted. Some mention that DDOS (distributed denial of service) attacks take place on websites, in comments, and in messages, using hate speech, and widespread reports of false incidents. A respondent also mentions that the state censoring organization, Roskomnadzor, banned the publication of educational materials about trans people on their website. In another case, a member of the parliament, known for his initiatives to ban the activities of LGBTQI organizations and activism in Russia, publicly called on social networks to close one of the respondent’s organizations. The murder of queer activist, [Yelena Grigoryeva](#), was also mentioned by respondents.

Respondents report that due to AG opposition, they have experienced the following challenges:



## Role of the Media

Respondents indicate that in Russia, AG actors tend to mostly use the traditional media (TV and print) to mobilize support and spread their agenda. Respondents report that this is not surprising as the AG actors are government actors, and the media is strictly controlled by the state. FaceBook and Instagram, as well as VKontake and Telegram, were also mentioned as key platforms used by AG actors to mobilize supporters and spread harmful/false information about TGD communities. While these false/harmful posts are often reported on social media platforms, the reports are usually ignored, and such posts are very rarely taken down.

Respondents fully (3) and somewhat agree (4) that social media platforms are the main sources for AG mobilization, and respondents fully agree (7) and somewhat agree (2) that social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned.



# Serbia

## AG Actors

According to respondents, AG actors are present in Serbia and government rarely investigates alleged crimes committed by AG groups. The political party, Dveri, was named as one of the AG actors that have seats in the parliament, and they receive funding as a political party. AG actors target ethnic and religious minorities, cis women, migrants, and the LGBTQI community, and use transphobia, “Western ideas/values”, sex education, “family values”, sex work, migration, racism, and homophobia as their main discursive topics in spreading and gaining support for their agenda. AG actors represent left- and right-wing ideologies on the political spectrum. Some AG groups coordinate with each other. A respondent says,

“Ženska solidarnost, Marks21, Lezbejska i gej solidarna mreža (LGSM), Autonomni ženski centar (AŽC), Labris Lesbian Human Rights - they support each other on the issues of violence against women, they believe that a certain space is safe if there are only cis women in the space and that “men want to rape them”, they want to criminalize sex work altogether, they (unlike Dveri) identify as Leftists, and sometimes some of them, e.g. AŽC, collaborates with right-wing “intellectuals” such as Miša Đurković because they agree that surrogacy should be prohibited. Đurković believes that feminism is a threat to a family and that there is a gay lobby, etc..”

In the past year, respondents report that AG actors in Serbia have been growing in terms of the number of people supporting them on social media and participating in their events, as well as their media presence.

According to respondents, the main barriers in counteracting AG opposition are lack of proper legislation, lack of political will, government siding with AG movements, general failure to hold perpetrators accountable / lack of police effectiveness, and AG groups being difficult to identify.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

Respondents had mixed evaluations of whether the human rights situation for TGD communities is improving in Serbia or not, with 1 respondent stating that the situation is worsening, and 1 indicating that it is improving. Threats and physical or verbal attacks were not reported in the Survey, but a respondent mentions that:

“We don’t share information publicly about our work with trans children because we are afraid of attacks.”

Respondents report fewer advocacy opportunities / limited ability to reach decision-makers, limited opportunities to involve allies in activities, fewer community members accessing services, and psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout experienced by staff/volunteers/board as the challenges experienced due to AG opposition. Respondents do not believe that AG actors have influenced any policy targeting the TGD community in the past year.

## Role of the Media

According to respondents, AG actors engage in the creation and spread of false and harmful information about TGD communities in Serbia, using TV and FaceBook, Twitter, YouTube, websites as well as Google Groups to communicate with audiences. While some AG posts have been reported, FaceBook has not taken their content down. 1 Respondent fully and 1 somewhat agrees that social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization, while both respondents fully agree that the social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned.

# Tajikistan

## AG Actors

According to respondents, some of the AG groups in Tajikistan are government officials. Alleged crimes by AG actors are rarely investigated. There are no AG political parties, but Молодежный комитет (Youth Cabinet) were named as the AG government actors. AG actors receive funding, but this information is not made public, or is hidden. AG actors target racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQI and TGD communities, and use sex work, “family values”, migration, and freedom of expression as their main discursive topics when spreading and raising support for their agenda.

Respondents report that AG actors engage in violence, including persecution and incarceration of vulnerable groups, as well as murder. Respondents indicate that there is no democracy in the country and that AG actors have a strong relationship with law enforcement institutions, and punish opponents. According to respondents, in the past year, AG groups have been growing in terms of political connections, and the number of people supporting them on social media.

Respondents note that the following factors serve as barriers to counter AG opposition: lack of proper legislation, lack of political will, lack of interest/actions from international organizations, and a general failure to hold perpetrators accountable / lack of police effectiveness.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

According to respondents, the situation regarding TGD rights has worsened in Tajikistan in the past year. Both respondents report experiencing verbal attacks and threats in the last 12 months. Specifically, they had problems with registration, and various state institutions investigating their work due to fabricated cases filed against them. These attacks are coordinated between various AG actors, according to respondents. 1 Respondent reports that gay men were being imprisoned. This incident was reported to the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM). CCMs are national committees that submit HIV, Tuberculosis, and Malaria-related funding applications to the Global Fund and oversee grants on behalf of their countries. The CCM did not take any action. Respondents believe that the reason for this inaction was a lack of political will.

1 Respondent also states that their LGBTQI organization's staff members experienced beatings and arrests, and some of their personal information was published online. These attacks were coordinated with other AG actors. Some of these incidents were reported to the militia, and in some cases perpetrators were held responsible, while in other cases the investigation was halted due to political will. Moreover, both respondents report receiving threats on social media due to their work, and received threats during physical attacks on their offices. The police were notified and the investigation is still ongoing as the incident occurred quite recently.

The LGBTQI organizations the respondents are affiliated with experienced the following challenges due to AG attacks: need to change location of physical office, need to cancel events, fewer advocacy opportunities / limited ability to reach decision-makers, limited opportunities to involve allies in activities, need to relocate staff/board/volunteers due to threats, fewer community members accessing services, psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout experienced by staff/volunteers/board (in both cases), staff/volunteers/board leaving their positions (in both cases), physical harm to staff/volunteers/board, and legal threats and/or proceedings.

1 Of the respondents reported the trend of a significant number of LGBTQI community members migrating from Tajikistan.

## Role of the Media

According to respondents, AG actors use print media, local webpages, and forums, FaceBook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to communicate with audiences. While some of their posts have been reported to social media platforms, harmful content rarely gets removed. Respondents fully agree that social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization, and also that social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned.

# Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations are based on the most common global trends revealed by the Survey.

The assessment from the majority of respondents that the human rights situation for TGD communities has worsened in the past year should be a cause for alarm for activists, policy-makers, and donors. This alarming reality that the Survey brings to light demands that there should be more of an investment in TGD activism in terms of creating more awareness and more critical knowledge about AG opposition.

Building on this knowledge, analyzing existing activist approaches would help to critically rethink activist strategies in order for them to be more effective. The efficacy of activist approaches and strategies ideally need to include other parties: there need to be more discussions and collaborations between donors, policy-makers, TGD activists, and other socially progressive actors in order to understand the factors contributing to the success of AG actors, and to develop joint strategies to counteract the growth and impact of the AG movement. For example, as AG actors are globally weaponizing concepts like “family values”, sex education, abortion, children’s protection, and “Western ideas”, more critical knowledge is needed to understand how these concepts can be reclaimed through redefining them outside of a cis-heteronormative lens. and how the public communication coming out of activist circles can be improved upon in order to counteract the skewed perceptions that these AG narratives create and foster.

Moreover, as AG actors have successfully managed to position TGD communities and their rights against the women’s/feminist agenda in several contexts, further specific knowledge needs to be created around this topic and more discussions between TGD and feminist movements need to take place in order to clarify that this is a false dichotomy manufactured by the AG movement, and that the principles, values, aims and goals that govern the TGD human rights movement are the same as those that underpin the feminist/women’s movement.

Another aspect that the Survey highlights is the leading challenge experienced by activists resulting from the AG opposition – that of the psycho-emotional well-being of activists. Political discussions at the highest level need to include an awareness of this challenge, as well as ways to prevent and/or mitigate it. Undoubtedly, donors need to invest more in the safety, security, and psycho-emotional well-being of activists. Without this investment, the tendency of activists to leave activism may grow, which would pose a serious threat to the TGD movements, and human rights activism in general.

Pursuant to this, the security and safety of activists and organizations need to be prioritized in funding models as well as in high-political discussions because, otherwise, a growing number of community members may no longer be able to access the services provided by TGD/LGBTQI organizations, which would leave these members in even more vulnerable situations, especially when it comes to life-saving services related to HIV, psycho-emotional support, and other medical, social, and legal assistances. For many, lack of access to these services means vulnerability and exposure to HIV and other health-related issues, homelessness, violence, incarceration, and even death.

Another issue highlighted by the Survey is that due to AG opposition, advocacy opportunities for TGD activists are becoming increasingly limited, and activists have less capacity to reach decision-makers themselves. Therefore, beyond the financial investment in advocacy, donor institutions themselves need to proactively invest in enabling and facilitating discussions between activists and decision-makers, as donors and other institutions have relatively more power to reach decision-makers.

Activists, donors, and policy-makers also need to invest more political attention and resources into international and national policies and legislation that tackle the disinformation and radicalization of the AG movement, as the Survey revealed the main barriers to counteracting AG opposition to be the lack of political will, lack of proper legislation, and general failure to hold perpetrators accountable / lack of police effectiveness,

Finally, as the Survey showed, social media is the main domain enabling AG discourses to flourish and mobilization to take place. Donors need to support activist communication efforts more and activists need to be more invested in effective public communication. This requires more knowledge and resources for effective messaging (including message testing), understanding social opinions and factors contributing to radicalization, and utilization of more diverse



communication channels. Most importantly, social media platforms need to be held accountable. More and more effective regulations and policies are needed to force social media platforms to enforce higher safety and ethics standards on their platforms, ensuring that they do not enable disinformation that leads to social conflict and violence. Due to the transnational nature of social media platforms, discussions and policy efforts targeted at them are needed at the international level.

## Summary of Recommendations

### Donors

1. In funding portfolios, prioritize projects aimed at:
  - a. producing more critical knowledge on AG opposition, factors contributing to radicalization, and effective strategies for counteracting it,
  - b. increasing the capacity of activists and organizations, as well as their safety, security, and well-being,
  - c. producing effective and wide-reaching communication,
  - d. building intersectional cross-movement alliances, and
  - e. tackling disinformation and radicalization.
2. Beyond funding advocacy projects, proactively leverage positions of power to facilitate discussions between activists and decision-makers.
3. Provide flexible funding to adequately respond to emerging issues and increase core funding opportunities.



## Decision-makers

1. Increase the participation of TGD communities in consultations for policy making – not only on issues that specifically impact TGD communities, but on all social issues.
2. Invest in understanding the factors contributing to anti-democratic radicalization, and conflicts operating in local contexts.
3. In consultation with various progressive/emancipatory and socially vulnerable groups, create or improve policies that address disinformation and anti-democratic radicalization.

## Activists

1. Mobilize new resources and invest the existing ones in improving the understanding of the factors contributing to radicalization, the nature of AG opposition, and strategies on how to effectively counteract it.
2. Mobilize new resources and invest the existing ones in effective communication, both in terms of the content and the channels to reach as many audiences as possible.
3. Mobilize new resources and invest the existing ones in the safety, security, and well-being of the staff, board, and volunteers of the organization.
4. Liaise with social media platforms or organizations who can provide support in reaching out to social media to address disinformation.
5. Focus energies on building alliances and solidarity with other socially progressive and emancipatory movements, especially among feminist groups.





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